



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

JUN 25 2010

The Honorable Jon Tester  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

Earlier this week we once again discussed false rumors about a supposed secret Department of the Interior plan to designate Federal lands in Montana as national monuments. This letter confirms my latest assurance on this issue that I made to you yesterday. There is no such plan. The mere act of holding meetings with interested stakeholders—on all sides of the monument designation issue—which is the job of public officials, does not constitute support or opposition to the ideas presented.

As long as I am Secretary of the Interior, there will be no recommendation for designation of national monuments in Montana unless there is significant public involvement, discussion, and debate over any such proposal. As I have repeatedly stated, I recognize and respect from my own experience as a U.S. Senator, the importance of local, public, and congressional input and support when considering protections for our natural, historic, and cultural resources. New designation and conservation initiatives work best when they build upon local efforts and input from nearby communities.

When the Administration held its very first listening session for the America's Great Outdoors Initiative 3 weeks ago in Montana; ranchers, landowners, community leaders, conservationists, and business owners told us they valued their working relationship with the Federal Government. The conservation model of the Crown of the Continent holds many lessons for how private landowners, nonprofit organizations, and governments can work together to accomplish mutually beneficial goals. This type of collaboration is exactly the model I have championed—and used—in my years in State and Federal office.

I look forward to continuing to work with you, Senator Baucus, and Montana's local communities on addressing the important natural resources and conservation issues facing Montana and our Nation.

Sincerely,

Ken Salazar